

Appl. No. 09/735,087
Amdt. dated April 22, 2005
Reply to Office action of January 26, 2005

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Applicants have received the Office action dated January 26, 2005, in which the Examiner: 1) rejected claims 1-6, 9-12, 14-21, 24-27 and 29 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Puhl et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 6,223,291) in view of Yu et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 6,067,621); and 2) rejected claims 7-8 and 22-23 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Puhl in view of Matyas et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 4,941,176).

With this Response, Applicants have amended claims 1, 3 and 16. Claim 3 was amended to correct for an antecedent basis issue.

Independent claims 1 and 16 have been amended to further clarify the present invention. Claim 1 for example now recites in part: "providing two or more master keys of which at least one master key is a most-secure master key and requiring a multi-part construction to be exposed, the multi-part construction requiring information from at least two most-secure key owners for the most-secure key to be exposed, the most-secure master key providing protection to the sensitive information". The cited Puhl reference fails to teach or suggest such a most-secure master key which requires two or more most-secure key owners to reconstruct the most-secure key. See for example, page 29, line 18- page 30, line 8 in the present application. The encryption/decryption (e/d) key of Puhl fails to meet the multi-part construction now recited in independent claims 1 and 16 which requires at least two most-secure key owners to expose the most-secure key. The other cited references also fail to teach or suggest such a most-secure key construction. Independent claim 16 has also been amended in a similar fashion. Given this, it is believed that claims 1-12, 14-27 and 29 are in condition for allowance over the cited references taken individually or in combination.

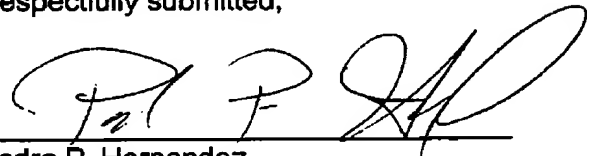
In the course of the foregoing discussions, Applicants may have at times referred to claim limitations in shorthand fashion, or may have focused on a particular claim element. This discussion should not be interpreted to mean that the other limitations can be ignored or dismissed. The claims must be viewed as a whole, and each limitation of the claims must be considered when determining the patentability of the claims. Moreover, it should be understood that there may

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be other distinctions between the claims and the cited art which have yet to be raised, but which may be raised in the future.

Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and that a timely Notice of Allowance be issued in this case. It is believed that no extensions of time or fees are required, beyond those that may otherwise be provided for in documents accompanying this paper. However, in the event that additional extensions of time are necessary to allow consideration of this paper, such extensions are hereby petitioned under 37 C.F.R. § 1.136(a), and any fees required (including fees for net addition of claims) are hereby authorized to be charged to Hewlett-Packard Development Company's Deposit Account No. 08-2025.

Respectfully submitted,



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